ACHRYMÆ MUSARUM

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LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM

AND

OTHER POEMS

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LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

(Sir) WILLIAM WATSON

London
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AND NEW YORK
1893

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TO

RICHARD HOLT HUTTON

AND

MEREDITH TOWNSEND

WITH GRATITUDE

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM	1
DEDICATION OF "THE DREAM OF MAN"	11
THE DREAM OF MAN	16
SHELLEY'S CENTENARY	34
A GOLDEN HOUR	42
AT THE GRAVE OF CHARLES LAMB	44
LINES IN A FLYLEAF OF "CHRISTABEL"	46
LINES TO OUR NEW CENSOR	48
RELUCTANT SUMMER	50
THE GREAT MISGIVING	52
"THE THINGS THAT ARE MORE EXCELLENT"	54
BEAUTY'S METEMPSYCHOSIS	60

PAGE
England my Mother 62
Night 70
The Fugitive Ideal 72
"The Foresters" 73
Song 75
Columbus 76

LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM

(6TH OCTOBER 1892)

LOW, like another's, lies the laurelled head :
The life that seemed a perfect song is o'er :
Carry the last great bard to his last bed.
Land that he loved, thy noblest voice is mute.
Land that he loved, that loved him ! nevermore
Meadow of thine, smooth lawn or wild sea-shore,
Gardens of odorous bloom and tremulous fruit,
Or woodlands old, like Druid couches spread,
The master's feet shall tread.

Death's little rift hath rent the faultless lute:
The singer of undying songs is dead.

Lo, in this season pensive-hued and grave,
While fades and falls the doomed, reluctant leaf
From withered Earth's fantastic coronal,
With wandering sighs of forest and of wave
Mingles the murmur of a people's grief
For him whose leaf shall fade not, neither fall.
He hath fared forth, beyond these suns and showers.
For us, the autumn glow, the autumn flame,
And soon the winter silence shall be ours:
Him the eternal spring of fadeless fame
Crowns with no mortal flowers.

Rapt though he be from us,
Virgil salutes him, and Theocritus ;
Catullus, mightiest-brained Lucretius, each
Greets him, their brother, on the Stygian beach ;
Proudly a gaunt right hand doth Dante reach ;
Milton and Wordsworth bid him welcome home ;
Bright Keats to touch his raiment doth beseech ;
Coleridge, his locks aspersed with fairy foam,
Calm Spenser, Chaucer suave,
His equal friendship crave :
And godlike spirits hail him guest, in speech
Of Athens, Florence, Weimar, Stratford, Rome.

What needs his laurel our ephemeral tears,
To save from visitation of decay ?

Not in this temporal sunlight, now, that bay
Blooms, nor to perishable mundane ears
Sings he with lips of transitory clay ;
For he hath joined the chorus of his peers
In habitations of the perfect day :
His earthly notes a heavenly audience hears,
And more melodious are henceforth the spheres,
Enriched with music stol'n from earth away.

He hath returned to regions whence he came.
Him doth the spirit divine
Of universal loveliness reclaim.
All nature is his shrine.
Seek him henceforward in the wind and sea,
In earth's and air's emotion or repose,
In every star's august serenity,

And in the rapture of the flaming rose.
There seek him if ye would not seek in vain,
There, in the rhythm and music of the Whole;
Yea, and for ever in the human soul
Made stronger and more beauteous by his strain.

For lo! creation's self is one great choir,
And what is nature's order but the rhyme
Whereto the worlds keep time,
And all things move with all things from their
prime?
Who shall expound the mystery of the lyre?
In far retreats of elemental mind
Obscurely comes and goes
The imperative breath of song, that as the wind
Is trackless, and oblivious whence it blows.

Demand of lilies wherefore they are white,
Extort her crimson secret from the rose,
But ask not of the Muse that she disclose
The meaning of the riddle of her might:
Somewhat of all things sealed and recondite,
Save the enigma of herself, she knows.
The master could not tell, with all his lore,
Wherefore he sang, or whence the mandate sped:
Ev'n as the linnet sings, so I, he said;—
Ah, rather as the imperial nightingale,
That held in trance the ancient Attic shore,
And charms the ages with the notes that o'er
All woodland chants immortally prevail!
And now, from our vain plaudits greatly fled,
He with diviner silence dwells instead,

And on no earthly sea with transient roar,
Unto no earthly airs, he trims his sail,
But far beyond our vision and our hail
Is heard for ever and is seen no more.

No more, O never now,
Lord of the lofty and the tranquil brow
Whereon nor snows of time
Have fall'n, nor wintry rime,
Shall men behold thee, sage and mage sublime.
Once, in his youth obscure,
The maker of this verse, which shall endure
By splendour of its theme that cannot die,
Beheld thee eye to eye,
And touched through thee the hand
Of every hero of thy race divine,

Ev'n to the sire of all the laurelled line,
The sightless wanderer on the Ionian strand,
With soul as healthful as the poignant brine,
Wide as his skies and radiant as his seas,
Starry from haunts of his Familiars nine,
Glorious Mæonides.
Yea, I beheld thee, and behold thee yet:
Thou hast forgotten, but can I forget?
The accents of thy pure and sovereign tongue,
Are they not ever goldenly impressed
On memory's palimpsest?
I see the wizard locks like night that hung,
I tread the floor thy hallowing feet have trod;
I see the hands a nation's lyre that strung,
The eyes that looked through life and gazed on God.

The seasons change, the winds they shift and
veer;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead; the birds depart, the groves decay:
Empires dissolve and peoples disappear:
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust:
The poet doth remain.
Dead is Augustus, Maro is alive;
And thou, the Mantuan of our age and clime,
Like Virgil shalt thy race and tongue survive,
Bequeathing no less honeyed words to time,
Embalmed in amber of eternal rhyme,
And rich with sweets from every Muse's hive;

While to the measure of the cosmic rune
For purer ears thou shalt thy lyre attune,
And heed no more the hum of idle praise
In that great calm our tumults cannot reach,
Master who crown'st our immelodious days
With flower of perfect speech.

DEDICATION OF "THE DREAM OF MAN"

TO LONDON, MY HOSTESS

CITY that waitest to be sung,—
    For whom no hand
To mighty strains the lyre hath strung
    In all this land,
Though mightier theme the mightiest ones
    Sang not of old,
The thrice three sisters' godlike sons
    With lips of gold,—
Till greater voice thy greatness sing

In loftier times,
Suffer an alien muse to bring
Her votive rhymes.

Yes, alien in thy midst am I,
Not of thy brood ;
The nursling of a norland sky
Of rougher mood :
To me, thy tarrying guest, to me,
'Mid thy loud hum,
Strayed visions of the moor or sea
Tormenting come.
Above the thunder of the wheels
That hurry by,
From lapping of lone waves there steals
A far-sent sigh ;

And many a dream-reared mountain crest
My feet have trod,
There where thy Minster in the West
Gropes toward God.
Yet, from thy presence if I go,
By woodlands deep
Or ocean-fringes, thou, I know,
Wilt haunt my sleep;
Thy restless tides of life will foam,
Still, in my sight;
Thy imperturbable dark dome
Will crown my night.

O sea of living waves that roll
On golden sands,
Or break on tragic reef and shoal

'Mid fatal lands;
O forest wrought of living leaves,
Some filled with Spring,
Where joy life's festal raiment weaves
And all birds sing,—
Some trampled in the miry ways,
Or whirled along
By fury of tempestuous days,—
Take thou my song!

For thou hast scorned not heretofore
The gifts of rhyme
I dropped, half faltering, at thy door,
City sublime;
And though 'tis true I am but guest
Within thy gate,

Unto thy hands I owe the best
    Awards of fate.
Imperial hostess! thanks from me
    To thee belong:
O living forest, living sea,
    Take thou my song!

THE DREAM OF MAN

To the eye and the ear of the Dreamer
This Dream out of darkness flew,
Through the horn or the ivory portal,
But he wist not which of the two.

It was the Human Spirit,
Of all men's souls the Soul,
Man the unwearied climber,
That climbed to the unknown goal.
And up the steps of the ages,
The difficult steep ascent,

Man the unwearied climber
  Pauseless and dauntless went.
Æons rolled behind him
  With thunder of far retreat,
And still as he strove he conquered
  And laid his foes at his feet.
Inimical powers of nature,
  Tempest and flood and fire,
The spleen of fickle seasons
  That loved to baulk his desire,
The breath of hostile climates,
  The ravage of blight and dearth,
The old unrest that vexes
  The heart of the moody earth,
The genii swift and radiant
  Sabreing heaven with flame,

He, with a keener weapon,
  The sword of his wit, overcame.
Disease and her ravening offspring,
  Pain with the thousand teeth,
He drave into night primeval,
  The nethermost worlds beneath,
Till the Lord of Death, the undying,
  Ev'n Asraël the King,
No more with Furies for heralds
  Came armed with scourge and sting,
But gentle of voice and of visage,
  By calm Age ushered and led,
A guest, serenely featured,
  Entering, woke no dread.
And, as the rolling æons
  Retreated with pomp of sound,

Man's Spirit, grown too lordly
  For this mean orb to bound,
By arts in his youth undreamed of
  His terrene fetters broke,
With enterprise ethereal
  Spurning the natal yoke,
And, stung with divine ambition,
  And fired with a glorious greed,
He annexed the stars and the planets
  And peopled them with his seed.

Then said he, "The infinite Scripture
  I have read and interpreted clear,
And searching all worlds I have found not
  My sovereign or my peer.
In what room of the palace of nature

Resides the invisible God ?
For all her doors I have opened,
And all her floors I have trod.
If greater than I be her tenant,
Let him answer my challenging call :
Till then I admit no rival,
But crown myself master of all."
And forth as that word went bruited,
By Man unto Man were raised
Fanes of devout self-homage,
Where he who praised was the praised ;
And from vast unto vast of creation
The new evangel ran,
And an odour of world-wide incense
Went up from Man unto Man ;
Until, on a solemn feast-day,

When the world's usurping lord
At a million impious altars
His own proud image adored,
God spake as He stept from His ambush :
" O great in thine own conceit,
I will show thee thy source, how humble,
Thy goal, for a god how unmeet."

Thereat, by the word of the Maker
The Spirit of Man was led
To a mighty peak of vision,
Where God to His creature said :
" Look eastward toward time's sunrise."
And, age upon age untold,
The Spirit of Man saw clearly
The Past as a chart out-rolled,—

Beheld his base beginnings
  In the depths of time, and his strife,
With beasts and crawling horrors
  For leave to live, when life
Meant but to slay and to procreate,
  To feed and to sleep, among
Mere mouths, voracities boundless,
  Blind lusts, desires without tongue,
And ferocities vast, fulfilling
  Their being's malignant law,
While nature was one hunger,
  And one hate, all fangs and maw.

With that, for a single moment,
  Abashed at his own descent,
In humbleness Man's Spirit

At the feet of the Maker bent;
But, swifter than light, he recovered
The stature and pose of his pride,
And, "Think not thus to shame me
With my mean birth," he cried.
"This is my loftiest greatness,
To have been born so low;
Greater than Thou the ungrowing
Am I that for ever grow."
And God forbore to rebuke him,
But answered brief and stern,
Bidding him toward time's sunset
His vision westward turn;
And the Spirit of Man obeying
Beheld as a chart out-rolled
The likeness and form of the Future,

Age upon age untold ;
Beheld his own meridian,
And beheld his dark decline,
His secular fall to nadir
From summits of light divine,
Till at last, amid worlds exhausted,
And bankrupt of force and fire,
'Twas his, in a torrent of darkness,
Like a sputtering lamp to expire.

Then a war of shame and anger
Did the realm of his soul divide ;
" 'Tis false, 'tis a lying vision,"
In the face of his God he cried.
"Thou thinkest to daunt me with shadows ;
Not such as Thou feign'st is my doom :

From glory to rise unto glory
  Is mine, who have risen from gloom.
I doubt if Thou knew'st at my making
  How near to Thy throne I should climb,
O'er the mountainous slopes of the ages
  And the conquered peaks of time.
Nor shall I look backward nor rest me
  Till the uttermost heights I have trod,
And am equalled with Thee or above Thee,
  The mate or the master of God."

Ev'n thus Man turned from the Maker,
  With thundered defiance wild,
And God with a terrible silence
  Reproved the speech of His child.
And Man returned to his labours,

And stiffened the neck of his will;
And the æons still went rolling,
And his power was crescent still.
But yet there remained to conquer
One foe, and the greatest—although
Despoiled of his ancient terrors,
At heart, as of old, a foe—
Unmaker of all, and renewer,
Who winnows the world with his wing,
The Lord of Death, the undying,
Ev'n Asraël the King.

And lo, Man mustered his forces
The war of wars to wage,
And with storm and thunder of onset
Did the foe of foes engage,

And the Lord of Death, the undying,
  Was beset and harried sore,
In his immemorial fastness
  At night's aboriginal core.
And during years a thousand
  Man leaguered his enemy's hold,
While nature was one deep tremor,
  And the heart of the world waxed cold,
Till the phantom battlements wavered,
  And the ghostly fortress fell,
And Man with shadowy fetters
  Bound fast great Asraël.

So, to each star in the heavens,
  The exultant word was blown,
The annunciation tremendous,

Death is overthrown!
And Space in her ultimate borders
Prolonging the jubilant tone,
With hollow ingeminations,
Sighed, *Death is overthrown!*
And God in His house of silence,
Where He dwelleth aloof, alone,
Paused in His tasks to hearken:
Death is overthrown!

Then a solemn and high thanksgiving
By Man unto Man was sung,
In his temples of self-adoration,
With his own multitudinous tongue;
And he said to his Soul: "Rejoice thou
For thy last great foe lies bound,

Ev'n Asraël the Unmaker,
  Unmade, disarmed, discrowned."

And behold, his Soul rejoiced not,
  The breath of whose being was strife,
For life with nothing to vanquish
  Seemed but the shadow of life.
No goal invited and promised
  And divinely provocative shone;
And Fear having fled, her sister,
  Blest Hope, in her train was gone;
And the coping and crown of achievement
  Was hell than defeat more dire—
The torment of all-things-compassed,
  The plague of nought-to-desire;
And Man the invincible queller,

Man with his foot on his foes,
In boundless satiety hungred,
Restless from utter repose,
Victor of nature, victor
Of the prince of the powers of the air,
By mighty weariness vanquished,
And crowned with august despair.

Then, at his dreadful zenith,
He cried unto God: "O Thou
Whom of old in my days of striving
Methought I needed not,—now,
In this my abject glory,
My hopeless and helpless might,
Hearken and cheer and succour!"
And God from His lonely height,

From eternity's passionless summits,
  On suppliant Man looked down,
And His brow waxed human with pity,
  Belying its awful crown.
" Thy richest possession," He answered,
  " Blest Hope, will I restore,
And the infinite wealth of weakness
  Which was thy strength of yore ;
And I will arouse from slumber,
  In his hold where bound he lies,
Thine enemy most benefic ;—
  O Asraël, hear and rise ! "

And a sound like the heart of nature
  Riven and cloven and torn,
Announced, to the ear universal,

Undying Death new-born.
Sublime he rose in his fetters,
And shook the chains aside
Ev'n as some mortal sleeper
'Mid forests in autumntide
Rises and shakes off lightly
The leaves that lightly fell
On his limbs and his hair unheeded
While as yet he slumbered well.

And Deity paused and hearkened,
Then turned to the undivine,
Saying, "O Man, My creature,
Thy lot was more blest than Mine.
I taste not delight of seeking,
Nor the boon of longing know.

There is but one joy transcendent,
And I hoard it not but bestow.
I hoard it not nor have tasted,
But freely I gave it to thee—
The joy of most glorious striving,
Which dieth in victory."

Thus, to the Soul of the Dreamer,
This Dream out of darkness flew,
Through the horn or the ivory portal,
But he wist not which of the two.

SHELLEY'S CENTENARY

(4TH AUGUST 1892)

WITHIN a narrow span of time,
Three princes of the realm of rhyme,
At height of youth or manhood's prime
From earth took wing,
To join the fellowship sublime
Who, dead, yet sing.

He, first, his earliest wreath who wove
Of laurel grown in Latmian grove,
Conquered by pain and hapless love
Found calmer home,

Roofed by the heaven that glows above
　　Eternal Rome.

A fierier soul, its own fierce prey,
And cumbered with more mortal clay
At Missolonghi flamed away,
　　And left the air
Reverberating to this day
　　Its loud despair.

Alike remote from Byron's scorn
And Keats's magic as of morn
Bursting for ever newly-born
　　On forests old,
Waking a hoary world forlorn
　　With touch of gold,

Shelley, the cloud-begot, who grew
Nourished on air and sun and dew,
Into that Essence whence he drew
　　His life and lyre
Was fittingly resolved anew
　　Through wave and fire.

'Twas like his rapid soul! 'Twas meet
That he, who brooked not Time's slow feet,
With passage thus abrupt and fleet
　　Should hurry hence,
Eager the Great Perhaps to greet
　　With Why? and Whence?

Impatient of the world's fixed way,
He ne'er could suffer God's delay,

But all the future in a day
Would build divine,
And the whole past in ruins lay,
An emptied shrine.

Vain vision! but the glow, the fire,
The passion of benign desire,
The glorious yearning, lift him higher
Than many a soul
That mounts a million paces nigher
Its meaner goal.

And power is his, if naught besides,
In that thin ether where he rides,
Above the roar of human tides
To ascend afar,

Lost in a storm of light that hides
His dizzy car.

Below, the unhasting world toils on,
And here and there are victories won
Some dragon slain, some justice done,
While, through the skies,
A meteor rushing on the sun,
He flares and dies.

But, as he cleaves yon ether clear,
Notes from the unattempted Sphere
He scatters to the enchanted ear
Of earth's dim throng,
Whose dissonance doth more endear
The showering song.

In other shapes than he forecast
The world is moulded: his fierce blast,—
His wild assault upon the Past,—
    These things are vain;
Revolt is transient: what *must* last
    Is that pure strain,

Which seems the wandering voices blent
Of every virgin element,—
A sound from ocean caverns sent,—
    An airy call
From the pavilioned firmament
    O'erdoming all.

And in this world of worldlings, where
Souls rust in apathy, and ne'er

A great emotion shakes the air,
And life flags tame,
And rare is noble impulse, rare
The impassioned aim,

'Tis no mean fortune to have heard
A singer who, if errors blurred
His sight, had yet a spirit stirred
By vast desire,
And ardour fledging the swift word
With plumes of fire.

A creature of impetuous breath,
Our torpor deadlier than death
He knew not; whatsoe'er he saith
Flashes with life:

He spurreth men, he quickeneth
To splendid strife.

And in his gusts of song he brings
Wild odours shaken from strange wings,
And unfamiliar whisperings
From far lips blown,
While all the rapturous heart of things
Throbs through his own,—

His own that from the burning pyre
One who had loved his wind-swept lyre
Out of the sharp teeth of the fire
Unmolten drew,
Beside the sea that in her ire
Smote him and slew.

A GOLDEN HOUR

A BECKONING spirit of gladness seemed afloat,
  That lightly danced in laughing air before us :
The earth was all in tune, and you a note
    Of Nature's happy chorus.

'Twas like a vernal morn, yet overhead
  The leafless boughs across the lane were knitting :
The ghost of some forgotten Spring, we said,
    O'er Winter's world comes flitting.

Or was it Spring herself, that, gone astray,
  Beyond the alien frontier chose to tarry ?

Or but some bold outrider of the May,
Some April-emissary?

The apparition faded on the air,
Capricious and incalculable comer.—
Wilt thou too pass, and leave my chill days bare,
And fall'n my phantom Summer?

AT THE GRAVE OF CHARLES LAMB, IN EDMONTON

Not here, O teeming City, was it meet
Thy lover, thy most faithful, should repose,
But where the multitudinous life-tide flows
Whose ocean-murmur was to him more sweet
Than melody of birds at morn, or bleat
Of flocks in Spring-time, *there* should Earth enclose
His earth, amid thy thronging joys and woes,
There, 'neath the music of thy million feet.

In love of thee this lover knew no peer.
  Thine eastern or thy western fane had made
  Fit habitation for his noble shade.
Mother of mightier, nurse of none more dear,
Not here, in rustic exile, O not here,
  Thy Elia like an alien should be laid!

LINES IN A FLYLEAF OF "CHRISTABEL"

INHOSPITABLY hast thou entertained,
O Poet, us the bidden to thy board,
Whom in mid-feast, and while our thousand mouths
Are one laudation of the festal cheer,
Thou from thy table dost dismiss, unfilled.
Yet loudlier thee than many a lavish host
We praise, and oftener thy repast half-served
Than many a stintless banquet, prodigally

Through satiate hours prolonged; nor praise less
well
Because with tongues thou hast not cloyed, and
lips
That mourn the parsimony of affluent souls,
And mix the lamentation with the laud.

LINES TO OUR NEW CENSOR

[Mr. Oscar Wilde, having discovered that England is unworthy of him, has announced his resolve to become a naturalised Frenchman.]

AND wilt thou, Oscar, from us flee,
 And must we, henceforth, wholly sever?
Shall thy laborious *jeux-d'esprit*
 Sadden our lives no more for ever?

And all thy future wilt thou link
 With that brave land to which thou goest?
Unhappy France! we *used* to think
 She touched, at Sedan, fortune's lowest.

And you're made French as easily
  As you might change the clothes you're wearing?
Fancy!—and 'tis so hard to be
  A man of sense and modest bearing.

May fortitude beneath this blow
  Fail not the gallant Gallic nation!
By past experience, well we know
  Her genius for recuperation.

And as for us—to our disgrace,
  Your stricture's truth must be conceded:
Would any but a stupid race
  Have made the fuss about you *we* did?

RELUCTANT SUMMER

Reluctant Summer! once, a maid
  Full easy of access,
In many a bee-frequented shade
  Thou didst thy lover bless.
Divinely unreproved I played,
  Then, with each liberal tress—
And art thou grown at last afraid
  Of some too close caress?

Or deem'st that if thou shouldst abide
  My passion might decay?

Thou leav'st me pining and denied,
  Coyly thou say'st me nay.
Ev'n as I woo thee to my side,
  Thou, importuned to stay,
Like Orpheus' half-recovered bride
  Ebb'st from my arms away.

THE GREAT MISGIVING

"Not ours," say some, "the thought of death to
dread;
Asking no heaven, we fear no fabled hell:
Life is a feast, and we have banqueted—
Shall not the worms as well?

"The after-silence, when the feast is o'er,
And void the places where the minstrels stood,
Differs in nought from what hath been before,
And is nor ill nor good."

Ah, but the Apparition—the dumb sign—
  The beckoning finger bidding me forego
The fellowship, the converse, and the wine,
  The songs, the festal glow!

And ah, to know not, while with friends I sit,
  And while the purple joy is passed about,
Whether 'tis ampler day divinelier lit
  Or homeless night without;

And whether, stepping forth, my soul shall see
  New prospects, or fall sheer—a blinded thing!
There is, O grave, thy hourly victory,
  And there, O death, thy sting.

"THE THINGS THAT ARE MORE EXCELLENT"

As we wax older on this earth,
 Till many a toy that charmed us seems
Emptied of beauty, stripped of worth,
 And mean as dust and dead as dreams,—
For gauds that perished, shows that passed,
 Some recompense the Fates have sent:
Thrice lovelier shine the things that last,
 The things that are more excellent.

Tired of the Senate's barren brawl,
An hour with silence we prefer,
Where statelier rise the woods than all
Yon towers of talk at Westminster.
Let this man prate and that man plot,
On fame or place or title bent:
The votes of veering crowds are not
The things that are more excellent.

Shall we perturb and vex our soul
For " wrongs " which no true freedom mar,
Which no man's upright walk control,
And from no guiltless deed debar?
What odds though tonguesters heal, or leave
Unhealed, the grievance they invent?

To things, not phantoms, let us cleave—
  The things that are more excellent.

Nought nobler is, than to be free :
  The stars of heaven are free because
In amplitude of liberty
  Their joy is to obey the laws.
From servitude to freedom's *name*
  Free thou thy mind in bondage pent ;
Depose the fetich, and proclaim
  The things that are more excellent.

And in appropriate dust be hurled
  That dull, punctilious god, whom they
That call their tiny clan the world,
  Serve and obsequiously obey :

Who con their ritual of Routine,
With minds to one dead likeness blent,
And never ev'n in dreams have seen
The things that are more excellent.

To dress, to call, to dine, to break
No canon of the social code,
The little laws that lacqueys make,
The futile decalogue of Mode,—
How many a soul for these things lives,
With pious passion, grave intent!
While Nature careless-handed gives
The things that are more excellent.

To hug the wealth ye cannot use,
And lack the riches all may gain,—
O blind and wanting wit to choose,

Who house the chaff and burn the grain!
And still doth life with starry towers
Lure to the bright, divine ascent!—
Be yours the things ye would: be ours
The things that are more excellent.

The grace of friendship—mind and heart
Linked with their fellow heart and mind;
The gains of science, gifts of art;
The sense of oneness with our kind;
The thirst to know and understand—
A large and liberal discontent:
These are the goods in life's rich hand,
The things that are more excellent.

In faultless rhythm the ocean rolls,
A rapturous silence thrills the skies;

And on this earth are lovely souls,
That softly look with aidful eyes.
Though dark, O God, Thy course and track,
I think Thou must at least have meant
That nought which lives should wholly lack
The things that are more excellent.

BEAUTY'S METEMPSYCHOSIS

THAT beauty such as thine
Can die indeed,
Were ordinance too wantonly malign:
No wit may reconcile so cold a creed
With beauty such as thine.

From wave and star and flower
Some effluence rare
Was lent thee, a divine but transient dower:
Thou yield'st it back from eyes and lips and hair
To wave and star and flower.

Shouldst thou to-morrow die,
Thou still shalt be
Found in the rose and met in all the sky:
And from the ocean's heart shalt sing to me,
Shouldst thou to-morrow die.

ENGLAND MY MOTHER

I

ENGLAND my mother,
Wardress of waters,
Builder of peoples,
  Maker of men,—

Hast thou yet leisure
Left for the muses?
Heed'st thou the songsmith
  Forging the rhyme?

Deafened with tumults,
How canst thou hearken ?
Strident is faction,
Demos is loud.

Lazarus, hungry,
Menaces Dives ;
Labour the giant
Chafes in his hold.

Yet do the songsmiths
Quit not their forges ;
Still on life's anvil
Forge they the rhyme.

Still the rapt faces
Glow from the furnace :

Breath of the smithy
    Scorches their brows.

Yea, and thou hear'st them?
So shall the hammers
Fashion not vainly
    Verses of gold.

II

Lo, with the ancient
Roots of man's nature
Twines the eternal
    Passion of song.

Ever Love fans it,
Ever Life feeds it,

Time cannot age it ;
  Death cannot slay.

Deep in the world-heart
Stand its foundations,
Tangled with all things,
  Twin-made with all.

Nay, what is Nature's
Self, but an endless
Strife toward music,
  Euphony, rhyme ?

Trees in their blooming,
Tides in their flowing,
Stars in their circling,
  Tremble with song.

God on His throne is
Eldest of poets:
Unto His measures
  Moveth the Whole.

III

Therefore deride not
Speech of the muses,
England my mother,
  Maker of men.

Nations are mortal,
Fragile is greatness;
Fortune may fly thee,
  Song shall not fly.

Song the all-girdling,
Song cannot perish:
Men shall make music,
  Man shall give ear.

Not while the choric
Chant of creation
Floweth from all things,
  Poured without pause,

Cease we to echo
Faintly the descant
Whereto for ever
  Dances the world.

IV

So let the songsmith
Proffer his rhyme-gift,

England my mother,
 Maker of men.

Gray grows thy count'nance,
Full of the ages ;
Time on thy forehead
 Sits like a dream :

Song is the potion
All things renewing,
Youth's one elixir,
 Fountain of morn.

Thou, at the world-loom
Weaving thy future,
Fitly may'st temper
 Toil with delight.

Deemest thou, labour
Only is earnest?
Grave is all beauty,
  Solemn is joy.

Song is no bauble—
Slight not the songsmith,
England my mother,
  Maker of men.

NIGHT

IN the night, in the night,
When thou liest alone,
Ah, the sounds that are blown
  In the freaks of the breeze,
By the spirit that sends
The voice of far friends
  With the sigh of the seas
    In the night!

In the night, in the night,
When thou liest alone,

Ah, the ghosts that make moan
  From the days that are sped:
The old dreams, the old deeds,
The old wound that still bleeds,
  And the face of the dead
    In the night!

In the night, in the night,
When thou liest alone,
With the grass and the stone
  O'er thy chamber so deep,
Ah, the silence at last,
Life's dissonance past,
  And only pure sleep
    In the night!

THE FUGITIVE IDEAL

As some most pure and noble face,
Seen in the thronged and hurrying street,
Sheds o'er the world a sudden grace,
A flying odour sweet,
Then, passing, leaves the cheated sense
Baulked with a phantom excellence;

So, on our soul the visions rise
Of that fair life we never led:
They flash a splendour past our eyes,
We start, and they are fled:
They pass, and leave us with blank gaze,
Resigned to our ignoble days.

"THE FORESTERS"

(Lines written on the appearance of Lord Tennyson's drama.)

CLEAR as of old the great voice rings to-day,
While Sherwood's oak-leaves twine with Aldworth's bay:
The voice of him the master and the sire
Of one whole age and legion of the lyre,
Who sang his morning-song when Coleridge still
Uttered dark oracles from Highgate Hill,
And with new-launchèd argosies of rhyme
Gilds and makes brave this sombreing tide of time.

Far be the hour when lesser brows shall wear
The laurel glorious from that wintry hair—
When he, the sovereign of our lyric day,
In Charon's shallop must be rowed away,
And hear, scarce heeding, 'mid the plash of oar,
The *ave atque vale* from the shore!

To him nor tender nor heroic muse
Did her divine confederacy refuse:
To all its moods the lyre of life he strung,
And notes of death fell deathless from his tongue.
Himself the Merlin of his magic strain,
He bade old glories break in bloom again;
And so exempted from oblivious doom,
Through him these days shall fadeless break in
bloom.

SONG

LIGHTLY we met in the morn,
  Lightly we parted at eve.
There was never a thought of the thorn
  The rose of a day might leave.

Fate's finger we did not perceive,
  So lightly we met in the morn!
So lightly we parted at eve
  We knew not that Love was born.

I rose on the morrow forlorn,
  To pine and remember and grieve.
Too lightly we met in the morn!
  Too lightly we parted at eve!

COLUMBUS

(12th October 1492)

From his adventurous prime
He dreamed the dream sublime:
  Over his wandering youth
    It hung, a beckoning star.
At last the vision fled,
And left him in its stead
  The scarce sublimer truth,
    The world he found afar.

The scattered isles that stand
Warding the mightier land
  Yielded their maidenhood
    To his imperious prow.
The mainland within call
Lay vast and virginal:
  In its blue porch he stood:
    No more did fate allow.

No more! but ah, how much,
To be the first to touch
  The veriest azure hem
    Of that majestic robe!
Lord of the lordly sea,
Earth's mightiest sailor he:
  Great Captain among them,
    The captors of the globe.

When shall the world forget
Thy glory and our debt,
Indomitable soul,
Immortal Genoese?
Not while the shrewd salt gale
Whines amid shroud and sail,
Above the rhythmic roll
And thunder of the seas.

THE END

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